STEVE ROGERS CAPTAIN AMERICA®

MARVEL

#18

SPENCER
CATES
PINA
GUINALDO
ROSENBERG

TORQUE

Super-Soldier. Avenger. Agent of Hydra. He is...

Steve Rogers
CAPTAIN AMERICA

A Cosmic Cube transformed Steve Rogers, Captain America, into the ultimate Hydra sleeper agent. After months of careful manipulation, Steve Rogers took control of S.H.I.E.L.D. and used a moment of international crisis to claim the United States for Hydra.

But with the shattered pieces of the Cosmic Cube hidden across the world, Steve hasn't been able to achieve his goal of rewriting reality in Hydra's image--and asserting Hydra's global dominance without its help is proving to be a challenge.

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WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF ***WAR*** NOW, CAPTAIN.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD TELL ME TO FIGHT, BUT I HELD ON TO HOPE THAT ***ANOTHER*** WAY COULD BE FOUND.

WE DO GO BACK SUCH A ***LONG WAY,*** AFTER ALL.

BUT THEN, THINGS HAVE ***CHANGED,*** HAVEN'T THEY?

FOR THE ***BOTH*** OF US.

BREAKING NEWS FROM BRUSSELS THIS MORNING, AS THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENES AN EMERGENCY SESSION.

WITH MOST OF ITS REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIALS STILL TRAPPED IN THE **DARKFORCE DIMENSION,** THE INTERIM BODY IS PREPARING TO WELCOME A SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER--

--STEVE ROGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA AND **SUPREME LEADER OF HYDRA.**

THIS WILL BE CAPTAIN AMERICA'S FIRST MAJOR ADDRESS ON **FOREIGN POLICY,** AND ALL EYES ACROSS THE GLOBE WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE WHAT HE HAS TO SAY--

--THOUGH EARLY REMARKS IN THE CHAMBER HAVE BEEN LESS THAN WELCOMING.

--ABSOLUTELY ABSURD! HOW MUCH LONGER CAN WE STAND BY AND--

--AN AFFRONT TO EVERYTHING WE HAVE STRIVED TO BUILD ON THE VERY FOUNDATION OF--

ASK THE PEOPLE OF LAS VEGAS WHERE THEIR FREEDOM IS NOW--

SETTLE! GENTLEMEN, SETTLE!

THIS IS BUT A SHOW, AND NOTHING MORE. THIS "CAPTAIN AMERICA" AND HIS LOT HAVE ALWAYS SHOWN THEMSELVES TO BE ABOVE THE LAW, AND THIS IS NO DIFFERENT!

YOU DON'T SEEM NERVOUS, MADAME HYDRA.

IT IS LONG PAST DUE THAT WE STAND UP TO THIS AMERICAN TYRANT AND TELL HIM WE WILL NO LONGER SIT IDLY BY FOR SUCH AGGRESSION!

AND WHY WOULD I BE?

THESE MEN WILL NOT TAKE THIS SPEECH LIGHTLY, I THINK. I HAVE SEEN HOW SUCH MEN RESPOND TO BEING... CHALLENGED.

PERHAPS. BUT...THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE HIM.

TRUST ME, GORGON...THEY MAY PROTEST AND PUFF THEIR CHESTS BEHIND THE SAFETY OF CLOSED DOORS...

"...BUT I HAVE SEEN MANY TIMES HOW MEN RESPOND TO THE PRESENCE OF TRUE POWER, AND IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME--"

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

"--WITH APPLAUSE."

KING NAMOR, HE'S BEGINNING HIS SPEECH. WOULD YOU LIKE TO WA--

NO.

LET THE GOOD CAPTAIN HAVE HIS LITTLE MOMENT. WE'LL HAVE OUR OWN SOON ENOUGH...

YES, SIR.

"THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE TODAY..."

I'LL MAKE THIS BRIEF.

THIS IS NOT HOW THE WORLD ENDS--

--BUT THIS *IS* HOW IT CHANGES.

I KNOW THE MAJORITY OF YOU ARE ACCUSTOMED TO AN OPENING STATEMENT THAT INVITES CONVERSATION, DISCUSSION AND DISCOURSE.

A PLACE WHERE IDEAS ARE HEARD AND MET WITH A POLITE BACK AND FORTH.

SO, LET ME BEGIN BY STATING THAT WHILE ***I AM HERE,*** THIS WILL NO LONGER BE TOLERATED.

I HAVE COME HERE TODAY NOT IN THE FORM OF AN AMBASSADOR, BUT AS A COURTESY TO YOU ALL.

THIS IS NOT A ***CONVERSATION***. I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH OF THE WORLD AS IT STANDS TODAY.

AND WHEN I AM FINISHED, I WILL LEAVE, AND CONCERN MYSELF WITH MATTERS OF ***TRUE*** IMPORTANCE.

SO, PLEASE DO PAY ATTENTION, AS THERE WILL BE **NO** QUESTIONS.

"FOR FAR TOO LONG NOW, COVERT ACTIONS AND OUTRIGHT ATTACKS AGAINST HYDRA AND ITS TERRITORIES HAVE BEEN TREATED LIKE A GAME.

HYDRA DATA STORAGE.

"IGNORED OR EVEN FORGIVEN FOR FEAR OF ESCALATION OR REPRISAL.

"THIS 'GAME' IS OVER.

"BEGINNING TODAY, ANY INSTANCES OF ESPIONAGE OR HOSTILE ACTS ON MY SOIL WILL BE MET WITH ***EXILE*** AND ***EMBARGO***.

"IN SHORT, IF YOU CANNOT KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF, OUR RELATIONSHIP WILL BE TERMINATED. NO MORE TRADE. NO MORE AID.

PACKAGE SECURE.

SABRA OUT.

"NO EXCEPTIONS."

AND BEFORE I CONTINUE, LET ME BE VERY CLEAR ABOUT SOMETHING. BECAUSE I CAN SEE THE DISDAIN AND INDIGNATION GROWING IN YOUR EYES ALREADY...

...HYDRA ***DOES NOT NEED YOU.***

THE DAYS OF GLAD-HANDING WITH FOREIGN DIGNITARIES AND POLITICAL OFFICIALS FOR FAVORS AND PHOTO OPS TO SHOW THE WORLD THAT WE GET ***ALONG JUST FINE...*** ARE AT AN END.

I AM NOT HERE TO TUCK YOU IN AND MAKE YOU FEEL SAFE. I DO NOT CARE IF YOU ***LIKE*** ME. IN FACT, I DO NOT CARE IF YOU ***HATE*** ME AND EVERYTHING MY REGIME STANDS FOR.

YOUR OPINION ***DOES NOT MATTER.*** BECAUSE, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT...

"...OUR MESSAGE *IS* RESONATING.

AHHH!

PARIS.

DON'T WORRY, BEAUTIFUL--

SWORDS-WOMAN'S GOT YOU!

"I'M SURE YOU ARE ALL AWARE OF THE RECENT ACTIONS OF THE SO-CALLED ***HYDRA SPLINTER GROUPS*** THROUGHOUT EUROPE.

"WHILE I DO NOT ***ENDORSE*** THESE ACTS, MAYBE IT'S TIME THAT WE LISTEN TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY...

"AFTER ALL, THROUGHOUT HISTORY, TIME AND TIME AGAIN, THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THEIR IDEOLOGIES ARE WITHOUT MERIT...

HAIL HYDRA!

EUROFORCE, TAKE THEM DOWN!

"...HAVE LASHED OUT VIOLENTLY AGAINST THE FORCES WHO AIM TO VILIFY AND SILENCE THEM.

"PERHAPS, FOR EVERYONE'S SAKE, THEY DESERVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE."

AND LET'S *TALK* ABOUT THAT TABLE. WHILE I HAVE--

THIS IS UTTER NONSENSE!

YOU JUST EXPECT US TO *KOWTOW* TO THIS GRANDIOSE *BULLYING?* WELL, I, SIR--

I EXPECT YOU TO *SIT DOWN!*

NOW, WHERE WAS I?

AH, YES. THE TABLE...

"WHILE WE NO LONGER HAVE ANY NEED TO RELY ON YOU FOR FINANCIAL OR MILITARY SUPPORT...

THE CIRCLE.
SOUTH CHINA.

"...WE ARE, HOWEVER, WILLING TO WORK ALONGSIDE YOU. TO HELP YOU TO GROW PROSPEROUS IN THIS NEW ERA AS REPRESENTATIVE HYDRA NATIONS.

"SOME OF YOU HAVE ALREADY DECLARED YOUR...**OPPOSITION** TO THESE IDEALS, CHOSEN TO REMAIN STUBBORN.

READY YOURSELVES, ASCENDANTS.

HYDRA WILL **NOT** TAKE THE CIRCLE.

"TO CONTINUE TO PLAY OUT YOUR ABSURD BORDER DISPUTES AND CLING TO YOUR FORMER SOVEREIGNTY.

"IT IS MY GREATEST WISH THAT YOU RECONSIDER THIS STANCE..."

...AS FINDING SUITABLE REPLACEMENTS TO TAKE YOUR SEATS WILL BE A TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS.

GREAT BRITAIN.

I KNOW THAT, TO SOME OF YOU AROUND THE WORLD, MY WORDS HERE TODAY WILL SOUND LIKE THINLY VEILED THREATS. LET ME ASSURE YOU...

NEW TIAN.

...HYDRA IS NO LONGER IN THE BUSINESS OF HIDING BEHIND VEILS. THESE TENETS ARE, AS OF TODAY, THE STRICT GUIDELINES AS TO HOW WE EXPECT THE REST OF THE WORLD TO BEHAVE.

TO PUT IT SIMPLY, IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO LIVE AND PROSPER IN OUR NEW WORLD, WE EXPECT YOU TO BEHAVE IN A MATTER WE DEEM...

...WORTHY.

NOW, ON TO THE UNCONTESTED TERRITORIES OF THE *SAVAGE LAND*... THE OCCUPYING FOR--

CLAP! CLAP!

AH, QUITE A ROUSING SPEECH, CAPTAIN...

...BUT THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM **WAKANDA** REQUESTS THE FLOOR.

T'CHALLA--

DON'T WORRY, "SUPREME LEADER." THIS WILL NOT TAKE LONG--AND YOU MAY FIND IT MOST INTERESTING--

--SEEING AS OUR BUSINESS VERY MUCH CONCERNS HYDRA.

"THREE TIMES NOW YOUR FORCES HAVE STEPPED FOOT ON OUR LANDS, SEEKING WHAT RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO US.

"THREE TIMES NOW THEY HAVE BEEN *SLAUGHTERED.*

"I MYSELF HAVE RUN OUT OF PATIENCE FOR THESE GAMES--

"--AS *ARNIM ZOLA* WILL CLEARLY ATTEST. BUT HE IS NOT THE ONE WHO RULES HYDRA, IS HE?"

SO I HAVE AN OFFER FOR THIS MAN, WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO INVADE OUR SOVEREIGN LANDS.

PERHAPS HE WOULD LIKE TO STOP SENDING MORE MEN FOR ME TO **KILL**. PERHAPS HE WANTS THIS TO **END**. PERHAPS HE WOULD LIKE TO COME--

--AND *SEE WAKANDA FOR HIMSELF.*

THIS SESSION IS *OVER.*

LET'S GO BEFORE THIS GETS ANY--

--WORSE.

NAMOR.

CAPTAIN. LOOKS LIKE I ALMOST MISSED YOU--

--THAT WOULD'VE BEEN SUCH A ***SHAME.***

YOU'RE ALMOST OUT OF TIME, OLD FRIEND. I HOPE YOU SEE THAT--

I HONESTLY HAVE ***NO IDEA*** WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. WE ARE HERE TO ENGAGE WITH THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY ON MATTERS OF STATE.

"I KNOW NOTHING OF THIS 'CUBE FRAGMENT' YOU KEEP SENDING ME THREATENING LETTERS ABOUT."

YOU'RE LYING.

AH, YOU KNOW ME SO WELL, "HYDRA SUPREME." HOW DID YOUR SPEECH GO? I HEARD IT WAS ***SHORTER*** THAN EXPECTED.

CAREFUL, NAMOR. I'VE ENDURED ONE SLIGHT TODAY--

--DON'T TAKE THAT AS PROOF I'LL ACCEPT ***ANOTHER.***

YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR WATCHDOG TO BE MORE CAREFUL. I UNDERSTAND HIS DESIRE TO PROTECT YOU--

--BUT HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND HIS KING DOESN'T HAVE MUCH OF A KINGDOM.

YOU'VE DONE AN ADMIRABLE JOB REBUILDING ATLANTIS, NAMOR--

--I WOULD HATE TO SEE IT RAZED TO THE GROUND AGAIN.

RETURN WHAT'S MINE--

"--BEFORE HYDRA TAKES IT BACK."

I CHOSE TO IGNORE THAT ADVICE, THOUGH, DIDN'T I?

NOW THE PRICE HAS BEEN PAID.

OUR TEMPLE DESTROYED, OUR PRIESTS SLAIN.

MY SURRENDER MADE COMPLETE.

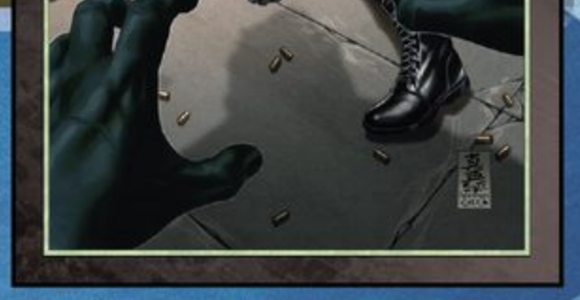
THE FRAGMENT IS YOURS.

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO WONDER WHAT TO DO NEXT--

--AND MOURN WHAT WAS LOST.

NEXT

SECRET EMPIRE #4



SECRET EMPIRE #5

ZONE